

*Chrons*

22 April 1988

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Trip Report - Fisk University (14-16 April 1988)

1. Fisk University, located in Nashville, Tennessee, is a traditional black university founded in 1867. My visit there was in conjunction with my wife's presentation of the Merrill Scholarship, named for her great-grandfather who was the second president of Fisk University. My intention while on campus was to talk to the university administrators about our programs, such as the Minority Undergraduate Program, the Co-Op Program, and the Undergraduate Scholar Program. Additionally, I thought it would be personally useful to seek guidance from the administrators on how we might strengthen our ties to the black universities and do a better job of recruiting black students. I had no intention of recruiting.

2. I had the opportunity to meet with the President of Fisk, Dr. Henry Ponder. I explained to Dr. Ponder what I intended to do while on campus and he expressed interest in both the Minority Undergraduate Program and the Undergraduate Scholar Program. Additionally, I had the opportunity to have dinner with Charles Warfield (Executive Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees) and Victor Johnson (past member of the Board of Trustees) who provided a great deal of insight into the financial difficulties faced by a small school like Fisk and the plight of many of their students who are unable to sustain their enrollment because of family financial pressures.


3. I met twice with Shirley Turner, Associate Dean and Director of Career Planning and Placement. The first meeting was simply to establish the scope of what I wished to discuss and to set up appointments with other members of the administration. The second meeting was attended by Joan Carter, the Internship Coordinator. We talked at great length about the Minority Undergraduate Program and I took the action to have our Agency focal point officers contact them upon my return to Washington. We also talked about a co-op program. They offered some very useful insight into some of the problems that they are having in setting up their own program and noted that in schools the size of Fisk the sense of belonging to a "class" and graduating with that class works contrary to the objectives of the co-op programs, which is to go through alternate work and school periods and extend the graduation date by as much as a year or more. They did note, however, that they have revitalized their internship program and are now turning their attention to establishing a co-op program, but perhaps on a limited basis. I again offered to have

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our focal point officers contact them in order to assist them in structuring their program and perhaps having some of their students co-op with the Agency. Both these actions have already been taken.

4. Perhaps the most useful meeting I had on campus was with the Director of Admissions and Records, Harrison DeShields, Jr. My purpose in meeting with him was to talk about the Undergraduate Scholar Program and to solicit ideas about how we might go about recruiting for that program. Mr. DeShields made some very interesting comments relative to the program and, in particular, about the criteria that is established relative to SAT scores. He offered me the attached rating form they use in evaluating prospective students and noted that whereas we allow a range of scores on the ACT from 18 to 20, which equates on their scale to a C to C+ average in high school, we have established an absolute 900 cutoff on the SAT scores, which he believes equates to C+ or low B average. He noted that inconsistency in both the scoring and that we did not provide a range of scores in the SAT. He also pointed out that while he understood our desire for quality students he felt that the 900 SAT score was going to act as a harsh cutoff for most students who might attend a predominately black school. His point being that those scoring above 900 would be sought after by the larger universities, state schools, etc. He further clarified his point saying that scores ranging from 850 or even as low as 800 should be considered if strength were shown in reading and if a fairly good GPA was attained in college preparatory courses in high school. As we talked about the program itself he noted that while he couldn't afford to do it at Fisk, larger colleges and universities (and he noted certainly the Central Intelligence Agency) can afford to purchase from the administrators of the SAT and the ACT the names, test scores, and other qualifications of black students. He noted that the larger universities use this as a means of making contact and mail information directly to the student or through the local high school to the student. He felt this may be an appropriate way of informing students of the availability of the Undergraduate Scholar Program. Besides a lot of very valuable insight into the mixed cultures that exist within a predominately black school, Mr. DeShields did note that Fisk provided some kind of financial assistance to roughly 80% of the student population and that clearly a Undergraduate Scholar-like program would be very attractive to some of their incoming students.

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R. W. Manners  
Director  
Foreign Broadcast Information Service

Attachment

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Distribution:

Orig - M/R file

1 - DDS&T

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## APPLICANTS RATING FORM

Applicant's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluators Initials \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home State \_\_\_\_\_ Intended Major \_\_\_\_\_

☒ Undergraduate Freshman ☐ Transfer ☐ Graduate ☐ Foreign

Number of Years of:

English \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_ Laboratory Science \_\_\_\_\_  
 History \_\_\_\_\_ Social Science \_\_\_\_\_ Foreign Language \_\_\_\_\_

Quality Points

Evaluation Criteria	3 Points	2 Points	1-Point	Record Points
Rank in Class	Top 10%	Top 20%	Upper-half	
Grades (Cum. GPA)	B+ to A 3.5 to 4.0	C+ to B 2.9 to 3.4	C to C+ 2.0 to 2.8	
High School Program	Advanced Placement Accelerated or Honors	College Prep	General	
Rating of High School	Selective Private School	Strong highly rated Public School	Public or Private Accredited School	
Recommendations	Strong Teacher Rec. and Counselor Rec.	Strong Teacher or Counselor Rec.	Good Rec. from Teacher or Counselor	
Activities	Talent and Leadership	Talent or Leadership	Active Participation	
Personal Statement (Essay)	Excellent?	Satisfactory?	Fair?	

## \*\* BONUSES \*\*

SAT or ACT	1000 or higher 25 or higher	900 to 999 20 to 24	800 - 998 18 - 23	
Legacy (List)	Add 2 points for legacy status (parents, grandparents or siblings)			

TOTAL POINTS

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Accept \_\_\_\_\_ Reject \_\_\_\_\_ Wait List \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended for Honor Scholarship \_\_\_\_\_